

Nixon Seen Aiming at Antitrust Laws

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SAN CLEMENTE, July 26—

President Nixon is considering major changes in the regulation of business and in the antitrust law to promote freer and greater competition, Roy L. Ash, director of the office of Management and Budget, said here today.

The aim in changing the antitrust laws should be "pro-competition rather than anti-trust," said Ash, the former head of Litton Industries.

The aim should no longer be to break up companies because they are too big but to make sure that there is a maximum amount of competition, the OMB director said.

"Do 100 weak competitors provide as much competition as 10 strong ones?" he asked. He said there should be a national debate on the subject.

Ash said there was over-regulation of some industries, as Mr. Nixon suggested in his Los Angeles speech Thursday.

The President's proposal to de-regulate the natural gas industry is "not getting very

far," Ash said in arguing for a new approach to federal regulatory processes.

New regulatory proposals will be made soon, he said.

Industry spending on environmental protection may be unduly contributing to inflationary pressures, Ash said.

In the Los Angeles speech, the President, in a reference to environmental protection, said Americans often "push particular social goals so fast or so far that other important economic goals are unduly sacrificed."

The costs of environmental protection account for about one half of 1 percentage point of the cost of living rise, Ash said, but that figure could rise to 2½ points in three years.

Some industries are estimating the cost of new environmental laws at 20 per cent of their capital spending, Ash said. "We have to re-state the proper balance between environment and the rate of economic growth," he said. "I don't say it is too much, But how much is enough?"

Legislation will be required

to keep the pendulum from swinging too far in the direction of environmental controls, Ash said, but he predicted no comprehensive bill would be introduced. The changes necessary will be effected by a number of minor legislative acts, he said. Ash maintained that the administration "is not paralyzed" by the impeachment debate and that much work is being done.